

Aaron Calhoun Turnage, Jr.

Aaron Calhoun "AC" Turnage, Jr.; son of Aaron Calhoun Turnage and Maybelle Flanagan was born January 30, 1928 in Pitt County, NC and died August 28, 2005. He married Vivian Taylor on February 10, 1951. He and Vivian had two daughters and a son; Sheila, Michael and Allison.

AC was born in the home his parents had built in 1912. He had three sisters, Evelyn Hope, Carrie Speight, and Carmen who were fourteen, twelve and nine years old when he was born. As you can imagine, he was spoiled by his mother and sisters but having three older sisters must have been daunting too.

AC grew up in the farming community of Farmville, NC. His father was a tobacco farmer and like most farm boys of that day he worked with his father and the other people on the farm as he grew up. One of his regular chores, which he hated, was milking the cow every morning. That was a feeling shared by his first cousin, Leland Flanagan, who lived nearby. Other cousins, like Jay and Harold Flanagan and Jack Turnage also had the same "opportunity" as they grew up. Perhaps it was something of a rite of passage.

He went to school in Farmville which had eleven grades and provided a good learning experience for him. He always claimed he was a ladies man. He may have had trouble explaining how the first time he kissed a girl "good night" he turned and walked off the porch where there were no steps. That first kiss must have been an exciting experience.

When AC finished high school in 1945, people were still being drafted into the Army even though WW II was virtually over. He worked for Belk-Tyler for a few months and elected to join the Navy as he said, "To see the world." That did not work out quite like he expected, however. He was assigned to the Naval Station at Great Lakes for training and stayed there for his whole two year tenure.

Prior to joining the Navy the recruiters told him if he would go to college for one quarter beforehand he would be assured of a place at N. C. State when he was discharged. He was discharged in 1948 and did exactly that. Using the G.I. Bill, he studied Civil Engineering and graduated in 1952. After graduation, AC worked as an assistant city engineer in Rocky Mount, NC where his oldest daughter, Sheila, was born. A year and a half later he moved to Jacksonville, NC where he became the City Engineer. About the time his son, Michael, was born, two years later, he accepted a job as Town Manager in Selma, NC. It was during this job; in 1957, that AC contracted tuberculosis. He was in a TB sanatorium for eight months and out of work for eleven months. During this period his wife, Vivian, taught school at Hookerton, NC and she and the children lived with Aaron and Maybelle Turnage, his parents. Fortunately, treatments for tuberculosis had improved greatly by this time and he was able to return to work.